



National Transportation Safety Board

Washington, D.C. 20594

Safety Recommendation

Log M-357D

Date: December 5, 1989

In reply refer to: M-89-150

To Cruise Vessel Owners and
Operators
(address list attached)

The National Transportation Safety Board has been committed to improving the safety of passenger vessels carrying U.S. passengers from U.S. ports. The Safety Board recently completed a study that reviewed safety issues for three broad groups of vessels: domestic passenger vessels, foreign flag passenger vessels operating from U.S. ports and carrying U.S. passengers, and some State-regulated domestic passenger vessels.^{1/}

One of the safety issues examined in the study is the need for a sufficient number of life jackets at muster stations. The accident report of the fire on the SCANDINAVIAN STAR^{2/} highlighted the Safety Board's concern that an insufficient number of life jackets were found in the storage lockers to accommodate all of the passengers reporting to some muster locations.

As a result of the SCANDINAVIAN STAR accident, the Safety Board issued the following recommendation on August 8, 1989, to SeaEscape, owner and operator of the vessel:

M-89-52

For each vessel in your fleet provide life jackets at each muster station for passengers in addition to those life jackets stored in the cabins.

The international safety convention, Safety of Life at Sea 74 (SOLAS) states the following in Regulation 7, "Personal Life-Saving Appliances":

Life jackets shall be placed as to be readily accessible and their positions shall be plainly indicated. Where, due to the particular arrangements of the ship, the life jackets...may become inaccessible, alternative provisions shall be made...which may include an increase in the number of life jackets to be carried.

^{1/} National Transportation Safety Board. 1989. Safety study: Passenger vessels operating from U.S. ports. NTSB/SS-89/01. Washington, DC. 175 p.

^{2/} National Transportation Safety Board. 1989. Marine accident report: Fire on board the Bahamian passenger ship the SCANDINAVIAN STAR in the gulf of Mexico, March 15, 1988. NTSB/MAR-89/04. Washington, D.C. 73 p.

The SOLAS requirements do not state that life jackets should be in a sufficient number to handle all passengers at muster stations. SOLAS does suggest that an increased number of life jackets may be carried.

The Safety Board believes that the U.S. Coast Guard should propose to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) more specific requirements for the placement of life jackets and the number of life jackets carried, specifically focusing on passenger vessels that carry life jackets in cabins but do not have enough life jackets for passengers at muster locations in the event of an emergency. The Safety Board recognizes that the IMO process to amend international regulations is lengthy and believes that the cruise industry operating from U.S. ports and embarking U.S. passengers can take accelerated action.

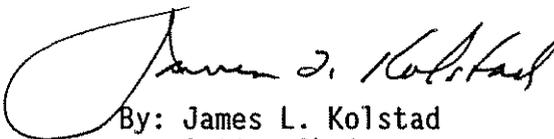
Therefore, as a result of its study, the National Transportation Safety Board recommends that (cruise vessel owner and operator):

For each vessel in your fleet, provide life jackets at muster stations for all passengers in addition to those life jackets stowed in the cabins. (Class II, Priority Action) (M-89-150)

Also as a result of the safety study, the National Transportation Safety Board issued Safety Recommendations M-89-111 through -145 to the U.S. Coast Guard, M-89-146 to the National Association of Passenger Vessel Owners, M-89-147 and -148 to the Cruise Lines International Association, M-89-149 to the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, M-89-151 to Washington State Ferries, and M-89-152 to the Governor and legislative leaders of the State of Washington.

The National Transportation Safety Board is an independent Federal agency with statutory responsibility "...to initiate and conduct special studies and special investigations on matters pertaining to safety in transportation..." (Public Law 93-633). The Safety Board is vitally interested in any actions taken as a result of its safety recommendations and would appreciate a response from you regarding action taken or contemplated with respect to the recommendation in this letter. Please refer to Safety Recommendation M-89-150 in your reply.

KOLSTAD, Acting Chairman, BURNETT, LAUBER, NALL, and DICKINSON, Members, concurred in this recommendation.


By: James L. Kolstad
Acting Chairman

List of Cruise Vessel
Owners and Operators

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